

# ASCENSION OF OUR LORD

## CONFIRMATION OVERVIEW & GUIDELINES

### The Sacrament of Confirmation

“Baptism, the Eucharist, and the sacrament of Confirmation together constitute the sacraments of Christian initiation,”...The reception of the sacrament of Confirmation is necessary for the completion of baptismal grace. For by the sacrament of Confirmation, [the baptized] are more perfectly bound to the Church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit. Hence they are, as true witnesses of Christ, more strictly obliged to spread and defend the faith by word and deed.” *Catechism of the Catholic Church (1285)*.

There was a time, in certain traditions, where Confirmation was conferred immediately following Baptism, almost as a “double sacrament”. For many reasons, including the increased number of infant baptisms all through the year, the increase in rural parishes, and the growth of dioceses, bishops became unable to be present at all baptismal celebrations, but it was the desire for him to continue to be the sole celebrant of Confirmation, so the sacraments were separated. *Catechism of the Catholic Church (1290)*.

At present, candidates for the sacrament of Confirmation must be:

- Baptized
- Not previously confirmed
- “Suitably instructed, properly disposed, and able to renew one’s baptismal promises”  
(*Canon 899*)

### Program Structure/Overview

**Stage I** is typically intended for students in their 9th grade year of high school.

**Stage II** is typically intended for students in the 10th grade year of high school.

For students not attending a Catholic high school, attendance at Ascension of Our Lord Parish’s School of Religion is required. Registration for the Parish School of Religion takes place throughout the summer with classes beginning in mid-August and ending in May. Students attending a Catholic high school must meet all requirements set forth by their chosen school.

**Immediate Preparation** is intended for **ALL** students beginning their 11th grade year in high school, whether they attend a Catholic, public, or private high school. Upon successful completion of Stages I and II, students will receive an invitation to begin Immediate Prep. Immediate Preparation classes will begin in mid-August of a student's 11th grade year. The classes will continue until Confirmation is conferred (usually November). These classes meet on Sunday evenings and will be followed by 7:00 mass, which students are expected to attend.

\*Immediate Preparation does not take the place of religious education classes. All students receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation must be enrolled in and attending either a Catholic high school or Ascension of Our Lord's Parish School of Religion. Students are reminded that Confirmation is not a graduation from religion education and are expected to continue attending PSR classes through 11th and 12th grades.

\* All Stages will conform to the academic calendar. Each Stage will run from August - May with the exception of Immediate Prep, which will run from the beginning of Vacation Bible School until the date of Confirmation.

### **Additional Confirmation Requirements**

Stage I (9th grade) requirements:

- 20 service hours (maximum of 5 personal hours)
- Attendance at either World Youth Day or Abbey Youth Fest
- Participation in the CYO's production of "The Road to Calvary: Reflections on the Cross" on Good Friday.

Stage II (10th grade) requirements:

- 25 service hours (maximum of 5 personal hours)
- Attendance at either World Youth Day or Abbey Youth Fest
- Participation in the planning, organization, and execution of the 1st Communion Retreat and Celebration.

Immediate Preparation (11th grade) requirements:

- 30 service hours (maximum of 5 personal hours)
- Regular attendance at Immediate Preparation classes.
- Participation in the planning, organization, and execution of Vacation Bible School.
- A typed research paper (1 full page) on the life of their chosen Confirmation saint
- Attendance at World Youth Day is required along with the participation in a Confirmation retreat.

-If a student is unable to attend either World Youth Day or Abbey Youth Fest in any of the stages, he or she will need to speak to the coordinator as soon as possible for alternate retreat possibilities.

**\*\*No student will be denied the opportunity to attend either retreat because of financial reasons.\*\***

-Youth events will be offered throughout the year to help fulfill service hour requirement. Youth events must provide spiritual direction, contain a mass, and must be Catholic. Examples of youth events are: Louisiana Right to Life March, MLK Day On Not Off, Youth Service Days (organized by Ascension), etc.

\*\*Service hours required for a specific stage must be completed during that stage. Extra hours earned are encouraged and applauded, but will not carry forward to the next stage.

### **Class Participation**

Our goal in the Ascension of Our Lord Confirmation Program is to ensure that each student enrolled is as fully prepared to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation as possible. While attendance is important to the fulfillment of that goal, of equal importance is active and sincere participation in the classes and service projects. Participation includes engaging in class discussions, cooperating with in-class activities, attending service projects, and completing assignments whether in or out of class.

### **Service Projects**

Because “faith without works is useless” (*James 2:20*) students will be required to participate in Service Projects throughout the course of the Confirmation program. These projects are described above for each Confirmation Stage. The Immediate Preparation students are assigned to Vacation Bible School in order to make certain their service hours are completed to preserve their time and focus for Confirmation preparation taking place in the fall.

Each stage of Confirmation is assigned to a service project to encourage active participation in our parish. If there is a serious conflict with the service project, the student should inform the director in advance. Arrangements will be made for the student to join a different service project.

**All service hours(including the 5 personal hours) must be logged in Ascension of Our Lord Church Parish.** Community hours must be earned during the provided group service days/projects.

## **Behavior**

Students are expected to follow Jesus' Great Commandment to love one another as themselves, therefore treating themselves and others, including fellow students and their catechist with respect. The following behaviors will not be tolerated:

- Verbal or physical abuse
- Bringing weapons of any kind to class, retreats, or youth events
- Talking, texting, or using cell phones during youth events
- Defiance

Continued failure to behave properly may result in the student being asked to leave the program, and it will be left to the discretion of the pastor as to whether the student is allowed to reenroll the following year.

## **Attendance**

Immediate preparation classes will meet on the dates listed in the calendar provided at registration. It is necessary for all students to attend all classes.

## **Mass Attendance**

Regular mass attendance is one of the most basic requirements of being Catholic. In hopes to help develop young adults ready to step into leadership roles, Ascension of Our Lord Church requires Confirmation students to sign in at mass or bring a bulletin to the parish office when attending mass outside of the parish.

## **Transition Period**

Students currently enrolled in Phase III will continue with previous requirements. They will be confirmed in Fall 2015 as planned, once they complete the requirements set forth when they began the Confirmation process.

Students currently in Phase II (10th graders for the 2015-2016 school year) will enter the newly structured Stage II in August 2015.

Incoming 9th graders will begin the Confirmation program in Stage I in August 2015.

ASCENSION OF OUR LORD CONFIRMATION PROGRAM  
PARENT/STUDENT OVERVIEW & GUIDELINES ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I (We), \_\_\_\_\_ have seen, read, and/or had explained to me the “Ascension of Our Lord Confirmation Overview and Guidelines”. I have had the opportunity to ask questions, comment on, or express concerns about those guidelines and agree to abide by them and encourage my child to abide by them for the entire time he or she is enrolled in the Confirmation preparation program at Ascension of Our Lord Parish.

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Parent Signature

Date

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Student Signature

Date